

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SAM-01

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R 141739Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO AMEMBASSY LISBON

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8696

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 04243

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PO, GW

SUBJECT: PRESS REACTION TO PORTUGUESE COUP

REF: LISBON 1381

SUMMARY: AS REQUESTED REFTEL, THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF WEST GERMAN PRESS COVERAGE OF THE MARCH 11 ABORTIVE COUP IN LISBON. END SUMMARY

1. THE ABORTIVE COUP IN PORTUGAL WAS TOP NEWS IN MOST PAPERS MARCH 12. AS A RESULT OF COUP, "FRANK-FURTER ALLGEMEINE" (INDEPENDENT) SAID IN ITS HEADLINE, "PORTUGAL'S FUTURE IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY UNCERTAIN." PORTUGAL ARE STRUGGLING FOR FAVORABLE POSITIONS FOR THE TIME AFTER THE ANTICIPATED ELECTIONS SO THAT THE ELECTIONS THEMSELVES SEEM TO BE JEOPARDIZED.

2. ON MARCH 13, SEVERAL PAPERS SAID IN THEIR LEAD STORIES PORTUGAL IS NOW RULED BY A "REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL" AND THE ABORTIVE COUP HAS STRENGTHENED THE RADICAL WING OF THE MOVEMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES.

3. "DIE WELT" (RIGHT CENTER) IN A MARCH 13 EDITORIAL BY BRUNO BANDULET: "THE REGIME IN LISBON FACES ONE UNCLASSIFIED

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MORE OBSTACLE ON THE ROAD TO TOTALITARIANISM, I.E., THE

ELECTIONS FOR THE CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 12. INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES WILL HAVE A MAJORITY IN THE ASSEMBLY. THE LEFTIST MILITARY LEADERS ARE AFRAID OF THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTIONS. THEY ALREADY HAVE RESERVED FOR THEMSELVES CONTROL RIGHTS OVER PARLIAMENT AND OVER THE (FUTURE) GOVERNMENT SO THAT THE VOTE OF THE PEOPLE WILL BE IN DANGER OF BEING REDUCED TO A FARCE. THEY DO NOT INTEND TO RELINQUISH POWER, REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTIONS.... THE DECISIVE TEST OF STRENGTH BETWEEN THE MILITARY LEADERS AND THE COMMUNISTS, ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS STILL AHEAD. HOWEVER, PROSPECTS OF FREEDOM IN PORTUGAL ARE DIM. NO ONE CAN SAY WITH CERTAINTY THAT THE BIG MAJORITY OF THE ARMY WILL WATCH DEVELOPMENTS WITHOUT TAKING ACTION. ONLY ONE YEAR AFTER THE OUSTER OF THE OLD REGIME PORTUGAL IS FACING THE TERRIBLE ALTERNATIVE OF TOTALITARIANISM OR CIVIL WAR."

4. ON MARCH 14 MANY PAPERS REPORTED A "WAVE OF ARRESTS" IN PORTUGAL IN THE WAKE OF THE ABORTIVE COUP BY MODERATE OFFICERS AGAINST THE RULING MOVEMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES.

5. "FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE" (FRONT-PAGE REPORT FROM LISBON) UNDER THE HEADLINE "SHIFT TO LEFT JEOPARDIZES PORTUGAL'S DEMOCRATIC FUTURE" REPORTED AS FOLLOWS ON MARCH 14: "A HEAVY SHIFT TO THE LEFT IS IN THE OFFING IN PORTUGAL. THE GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE ENVISAGED FOR THIS WEEKEND MAY INDICATE WHETHER THE GOAL OF MAKING PORTUGAL A PLURALISTIC DEMOCRACY WILL BE ADHERED TO. THE ABSURD COUP *:\$8I

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MARCH 14: "MORE THAN FIFTY--DIPLOMATIC QUARTERS SAY SEVERAL HUNDRED--PERSONS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AFTER THE

ABORTIVE COUP. THEY COMPRISE OFFICERS, INDUSTRIALISTS, MEMBERS OF THE RICHEST FAMILIES IN THE COUNTRY. THE ROLE PLAYED BY GENERAL SPINOLA IN THE COUP IS NOT CLEAR YET. THE FOUR OFFICERS WHO HAD SOUGHT ASYLUM IN THE GERMAN EMBASSY WERE TURNED OVER TO PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES ON THE BASIS OF THE INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS OF 1961. IN THE VIEW OF SPD EXECUTIVE MEMBER BRUNO FRIEDRICH, THERE IS NO REASON FOR THE BONN GOVERNMENT OR THE SPD TO SEVER THEIR

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INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8697

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"GOOD CONTACTS" WITH THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT."

7. ON MARCH 14 THE "NEUE RHEIN ZEITUNG" (PRO-SPD) REPORTED ANTI-GERMAN DEMONSTRATIONS AT THE GERMAN EMBASSY IN LISBON AND THROWING OF STONES AT AMBASSADOR FRITZ CASPARI.

8. "GENERAL-ANZEIGER" (INDEPENDENT IN A MARCH 14 REPORT BY JIM ANDERSON): "A STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT 'CATEGORICALLY' SHORTLY AFTER THE ABORTIVE COUP THAT THE U.S. HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. REPORTERS SAW NO REASON FOR QUESTIONING HIS ASSURANCE SINCE THE

COUP WAS 'ORGANIZED SO AMATEURISHLY AND SO POORLY
THAT NO ONE HAD SUSPECTED THE CIA OF HAVING HAD ITS
FINGERS IN IT.' WHEN THE CHIEF OF PORTUGUESE
SECURITY FORCES STATED IN A RADIO INTERVIEW THAT IT
WOULD BE BETTER FOR U.S. AMBASSADOR CARLUCCI TO LEAVE
THE COUNTRY BECAUSE PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES COULD NO
LONGER GUARANTEE HIS PERSONAL SECURITY, CARLUCCI POINTED
OUT STRONGLY AND VERY CLEARLY THAT THE PORTUGUESE
GOVERNMENT EITHER WOULD HAVE TO PROVIDE FOR HIS SECU-
RITY OR SEVER DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH WASHINGTON.
HIS TAKING SUCH A TOUGH POSITION OBVIOUSLY HAS PRODUCED
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RESULTS...."

9. "SUEDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG" (EDITORIAL, MARCH 14):
"PORTUGAL IS NOT YET A DEMOCRACY NOR DOES IT HAVE
ANOTHER DICTATORSHIP. HOWEVER, THE MOVEMENT OF
THE ARMED FORCES IS ACCELERATING THE REVOLUTION AFTER
THE ABORTIVE COUP.... THE WAVE OF ARRESTS, INCLUDING
THOSE OF LAST YEAR, MUST SOON BE FOLLOWED BY CORRECT
TRIALS LEST THE ASSURANCE BY PRESIDENT GOMEZ THAT
PORTUGAL IS ON ITS ROAD TO PLURALISTIC DEMOCRACY
BECOMES INCREDIBLE."
HILLENBRAND

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